

# What's New?

Niihama City

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## “America Needs to Learn Japans Tune”

By Sean Solberg

The first time I heard a Japanese concert band I was in university, just finishing a rehearsal. Our concert band was preparing for a performance, and we were feeling very confident in our ability. As we were finishing, our school’s orchestra director entered our rehearsal space, smiling a wide smile. After a brief conversation with our band director he put a CD into the room’s stereo, and played a recording of a piece that our band would soon be performing. The group on the recording was obviously a high level University band, or even a professional ensemble. When we asked our school’s orchestra director the name of the university that performed the piece, he laughed and told us that the group was the winner of the All Japan Band Association ensemble contest; the elementary school category winner to be exact. The orchestra director, who was Japanese, then told us how a group of young children was playing our piece at a higher level than we were. Later when I was a professional trombone player in Chicago, whenever a student became too confident in their own ability, I would play them a recording of that year’s elementary school winner of the All Japan Band Association contest as a lesson in humility.

America’s public schools have music education, but not at the level of Japan’s public schools. An American middle school or high school will have at most fifteen hours of concert band rehearsal a week, with the students expected to practice by themselves at home and take private lessons once a week. A Japanese band club can expect to meet over thirty hours a week; however, the students aren’t expected to practice at home or study privately. Most Japanese band clubs enter the All Japan Band Association’s summer contest, have a public performance in the fall or spring, and also enter small groups in other solo and ensemble competitions. While this sounds busy, an American band will often have a performance once a week; playing for public events, as a pep band for the schools sports teams, as well as contests.

Unfortunately this busy schedule leaves little time to prepare so the quality of performance suffers greatly. American students are also encouraged to participate in more than one after school activity, such as sports or debate club, in addition to music. The idea behind this is to appeal to universities' search for "well rounded" students, or in other words, students who are able to do many things; this leads to few people pursuing music after school.

I believe Japanese music education has a strong impact on its society; American symphony orchestras have been steadily losing its audience as its fans grow older and young people can't be bothered to learn about art music, but Japanese orchestras suffer far less from this phenomenon. I believe this is because Japans education system helps create new audiences for the arts. Before I moved to Japan I had never seen a classical musician of any sort on prime time TV, but in Japan it's quite common. Here, playing an instrument other than bass or guitar isn't considered "un cool", there are popular movies about kids in band, and even game shows with classical piano contests. For a guy like me that got called names as kid for playing trombone, Japan is a dream come true!

Of all of the wonderful points about the Japanese music education system, my favorite is the great sense of community it fosters among musicians here. The hundreds of hours of rehearsal and dozens of contests and performances really cement a young person's identity as a life-long practitioner and supporter of the arts, further evidenced by the large number of non professional civic groups throughout the country. Any mid-sized city here can expect to have at least one music group that meets year-round, if not several.

Community support for music groups in Japan is excellent as well, with groups being invited to play at public functions, and community band performances being featured on local television. I take any opportunity I can to brag about Japans music scene to my musician friends in America, it really is wonderful!



Sean Solberg grew up on a farm in one of the least populated parts of the U.S.A, and before moving to Japan was a professional trombonist in Chicago. He now lives in Shikokuchuoshi with his family where he teaches English and trombone lessons. Come see him perform with KIDS brass sometime, you'll have a great time!

## From an ALT's Blog

One of the most famous places in Japan is Miyajima. Even if you don't know the name, you have probably seen pictures of the famous red gate floating in water. When I told my parents I was going to visit Miyajima, and they asked what that was, I told them to look for a picture, and when they saw the picture, they immediately recognized it. I was excited to visit such a beautiful landmark.

We were lucky enough to catch Miyajima at high tide, so the red gate looked stunning against the waves. It was also hanami season when we went, and the sakura trees in full bloom framed the gate beautifully. But Miyajima was full of other incredible sights, including the Buddhist temple, which is part of Hiroshima's 33-temple Kannon, similar to Shikoku's 88-temple pilgrimage.

At the temple, we purified our hands with incense powder, and I could still smell it after several hours. I love visiting temples in Japan; they feel so peaceful, and the buildings and statues are beautiful to look at. But, at the same time, since I don't know much about Buddhism, it's hard for me to appreciate it fully.

But every time I visit a temple, I learn something new. At the Miyajima temple, I learned that the same man who founded the Ohenro was connected to the temple. I learned that pregnant women put hats on Buddha statues to pray for safe childbirth, and I saw statues of the different temples in Hiroshima's pilgrimage.

That's one of the things I love about living in a different country. I get to learn new things about a different culture every day, and by visiting new places and trying new things, I'm able to understand the world a little better.

### Information in English & Chinese on the Web

**\*What's New?**

**\*How to sort garbage and trash**

Visit <http://www.city.niihama.lg.jp> Clair: **\*Multilingual Living**

### Information

<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengorev/en/index.html>



SGG would welcome any suggestions, questions, or ideas for monthly articles.

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\* The editors for this month are K. Kaida and M. Miki.

## **Bus Tours for Setouchi Triennale 2016**

(from Nikkei March 16, 2016)

Bus tours visiting the islands for the Setouchi Triennale 2016 are being organized by Shin Nihon Tourist, a travel company in Takamatsu. You can appreciate museum exhibits and art works on the islands. There are four different one-day tours, each starting at Takamatsu Port:

Naoshima: ¥15,800

Ogijima: ¥3,500

Shodoshima: ¥13,800

Teshima: ¥17,800

The ticket price includes ferry fare, admission for museums and lunch cost. The number of tourists in one tour group is 15-25. They go around the island by bus accompanied by a tour conductor. On the Naoshima tour, you have lunch and enjoy art works at Tsutsuji-so Inn. After that you visit Benesse House Museum and Chichu Art Museum. During the Setouchi Triennale 2016, you can get a ¥2,000 discount when you have the Triennale 3-Season passport. The tours will be held in spring, summer and fall.

## **Specialties of Ehime introduced on Ehime Government English Website** (from Nikkei March 16, 2016)

The Ehime Government has launched an English website showing Ehime prefecture's special products. On this website, 320 agricultural, forest and fishery products and processed food items are shown as "Sugo-aji, Excellent Food". In addition, 130 traditional products are shown as "Sugo-mono, Excellent Work". The government hopes this website will help foreign buyers know more about Ehime's specialties.

Each item's usage, features and price are shown in English on the site. In the "sugo-aji" group, fruits and vegetables, stock farm and marine products are introduced. In "sugo-mono", towels, clothes and accessories are introduced. You can search for something you want by narrowing the list on the site. Some items are linked to online shopping sites and consumers can buy goods directly from producers.

The Ehime Prefectural Government will promote the website in business meetings in an effort to spread the word about products from Ehime. They say that they will make this site more flexible, in order to add new goods or replace goods.

## June Events

### Niihama City Pool

Open from June 20<sup>th</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>

Fee: 60 yen for adults, 10 yen for children (up to 2 hours)

Time: June 20<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> Monday to Friday, 12:30 – 17:30

Sunday, 9:30 – 17:30

July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>, 9:30 – 20:00

### Saturday Evening Market

Every Saturday from June 4<sup>th</sup> to July 16<sup>th</sup>, 18:00 – 21:00 at Kikoji Shopping Arcade.

### Monthly Special Sunday Market (100 yen Sun-sun Market)

Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, at Noborimichi Sun Road



## Japanese Speech Contest

Date: June 26<sup>th</sup>, 13:30 – 16:00

Place: *Sogo Fukushi Center (Fureai Plaza) 2F*

Please come and enjoy listening to the contest. The speakers are all non-Japanese living in and around Niihama and learning Japanese. They will give speeches about their experiences, opinions, and thoughts.



## MOVIE

### TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Mall)

April 23 ~	Zootopia	2D Dubbed
April 29 ~	Captain America: Civil War	2D Dubbed
May 27 ~	The Huntsman : Winters War	2D English / 2D Dubbed
June 1 ~	Deadpool	2D English / 2D Dubbed
June 10 ~	Money Monster PG12	2D English

Information Service  
Internet: <http://niihama-aeonmall.com>  
Tape (24 hrs): 050-6868-5019(in Japanese)

Movies might be changed without notice. Please check.

# ONE POINT JAPANESE

## ながび “長引く”

待ち合わせ場所で At a meeting place

A : 遅くなって、すみません。Osokunatte, sumimasen.  
(Sorry I'm late.)

B : 何か あったんですか。Nanika attan desu ka.  
(Did something happen?)

A : ちょっと 打ち合わせが 長引いてしまって・・・  
Chotto uchiawase ga nagabīte shimatte...  
(Our meeting ran over a little...)

A : あれ?いつものドラマ、まだ 始まって いないの?  
Are? Itsumo no dorama, mada hajimatteinai no?  
(What? The usual drama hasn't started yet?)

B : バレーの 試合が 長引いたので、1時間遅れで 始まるみたい。  
Barē no shiai ga nagabīta node, ichijikan okure de hajimaru mitai.  
(The volleyball game ran long, so it seems it'll start an hour late.)

A : そうなんだ。Sō nan da. (Is that so?)  
その点、サッカーは、試合時間が 決まってる から 安心だね。  
Sono ten, sakkā wa shiai jikan ga kimatteru kara anshin da ne.  
(On that score, soccer playing time is set, so there's no need to worry.)

A : 熊本地震、少し 落ち着いたようですね。  
Kumamoto no jishin, sukoshi ochitsuita yō desu ne.  
(The earthquakes in Kumamoto seem to have settled down a little.)

B : でも、まだ 避難所生活を している 人が たくさん いるよう ですよ。  
Demo, mada hinanjo seikatsu o shiteiru hito ga takusan iru yō desu yo.  
(But there still seem to be many people living in evacuating sites.)

A : 不便な 生活が 長引くと、体調管理も 大変ですね。  
Fuben na seikatsu ga nagabiku to, taichō kanri mo taihen desu ne.  
(If inconvenient life continues for a long time, it's difficult to stay in good physical condition.)

A : しんどそうですね。 Shindosō desu ne.  
(You look very tired.)

B : ええ、咳が 長引いて、夜 あまり 眠れないんです。  
Ee, seki ga nagabīte, yoru amari nemurenain desu.  
(Yes, this cough has been dragging on, so I'm not sleeping well.)

A : 一度 病院で みてもらったほうがいいかもしれませんよ。  
Ichido byōin de mite moratta hō ga ii kamoshiremasen yo.  
(It's probably a good idea to have it checked out by a doctor once.)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

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